

# Mercy Full Project

## Cat Foster Handbook



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## Mercy Full Projects Thanks YOU!

**Thank you for opening your home and your heart to a kitten or cat in need.**

Whether you foster a kitten that needs some time to grow, or an adult cat who needs a little extra TLC, YOU make it possible for us to provide the very best care possible for all our residents at Mercy Full Project. Fostering is messy, rewarding, stinky, adorable, and sometimes a heartbreaking job. We certainly couldn't do it without valuable foster homes like yours!

From all our cats and kittens:



## Greetings, Foster Parents!

Thank you for participating in Mercy Full Project Cat Foster Program. We appreciate your willingness to open your heart and home to homeless mother cats and kittens. Your dedication allows our organization to rescue cats we would otherwise have to turn away due to limited space in our rescue.

The guiding mission of the Cat Foster Program is to give mother cats and kittens the individualized care and socialization they need to prepare them for adoption. Information gathered during the foster process helps us place cats and kittens in homes with families who can best meet their needs. Specific goals of the program include:

- Providing a safe, healthy, nurturing environment for mother cats to raise their kittens.
- Socializing shy or timid cats and kittens.
- Allowing mother cats to recover in a relaxing, uplifting environment.
- Giving orphaned kittens a leg up with the socializing and a loving foster home they can flourish in.

This manual outlines the responsibilities and expectations of Mercy Full Project foster volunteers. This should serve as a resource throughout your foster care experience.

Before taking your assigned foster cats/kittens home, please:

- Review the overview of key responsibilities and policies.
- Read and sign the foster care agreement.
- Give these completed forms to the Foster Care Coordinator. If the Cat Foster Care Coordinator isn't available, give the forms to the Supervisor on duty.
- Before you leave the rescue, schedule to come back for any follow ups needed for the pet



## Overview of Key Responsibilities and Policies

To ensure a successful foster program, we ask that you follow our general policy guidelines to ensure that each foster home is responsibly providing a wonderful home for these kittens to grow up and explore the world in. To this effect, you will want to keep in mind the following;

1. Please follow any and all directions given to you by MFP staff.
2. These kittens/cats belong to Mercy Full Project and MFP is responsible for any and all medical care the cats needs. It is against our policys/procedures for you to seek medical advice from other foster parents, the internet, friends, etc. There is a protocol to follow, if you have questions PLEASE contact MFP Cat Foster Coordinator.
3. Please make sure you are following proper procedure when it comes to getting your kitten medical care.
4. If your kitten is in distress and/or it is apparent it is going to pass away, please contact us IMMEDIATLEY, so we may help it during its final moments.
5. If you wish to seek medical care elsewhere you must obtain permission from the rescue.
6. You are responsible for bringing your cat/kittens to MFP for any and all appointments (vet exams, vaccines, surgery, etc), if you find yourself unable to do this, please communicate with the rescue.
7. All foster animals must be kept separate from resident animals.
8. Please make sure you are following proper sanitation protocols (found in the manual).

## Need Help? Who to Call

Foster cat/kittens can be wonderful, but they can also have health issues and health scares at times.

We have a fantastic group of supportive and knowledgeable foster parents, that serve as mentors. You can contact your medical coordinator, MFP owner or adoption coordinators for help. Prior to taking any animal to a vet, you need prior approval.



# Cat Foster Contact List

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Heydi MFP founder- 813-836-0711

Beth Adoption Coordinator-813-293-1846

Jessie Adoption

Coordinator-813-309-1912  
Lauren Medical Coordinator-786-516-7245



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**Emergency Veterinarian  
Veterinarian Emergency  
Group  
TLC Petsnip Spay/Neuter  
Clinic Lakeland, FL  
Wellswood Animal Hospital 813-877-1979 primary vet care**

**\*\*If your foster kitty/caat requires emergency care YOU MUST GET PRIOR APPROVAL**

### **Kitty-Proofing Your Foster Home**

Cat-proofing and especially kitten-proofing your home is much the same as child-proofing it! That means hiding or removing cords, removing small items that kittens can choke on, etc. Use the following tips as a guide to make your foster room and home safe for cats and kittens:

- Make sure the garbage, cleaning supplies, and medicine are secure.
- Get into the habit of checking your refrigerator, oven, washer, dryer, freezer, dishwasher, etc. before these doors get closed. Kitty may have leaped in. These horrible accidents happen more often than you would expect.
- Watch that hot irons or other hot or heavy objects a rambunctious kitty may knock down aren't left out. Use non-toxic products whenever possible.
- Review the toxic houseplant list at [www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants](http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants) and remove all poisonous plants from your house.
- Keep all small items like rubber bands, paper clips, needles, thread, and fishhooks- anything kitty can swallow-out of reach.
- Never leave razors in the bathroom if this is where you are housing kitty.
- Keep plastic bags, which can cause suffocation, out of reach.
- Exposed electrical cords are a very real danger. Kitties will chew them and can be electrocuted. This can cause burns or death. Encase cords in flexible tubing (available at office supply stores) for just this purpose.



- The best way to prevent accidents is to house fosters away from hot items; water heaters, fireplaces, wood burning stoves can be hazardous.
- **Remember cats/kittens are curious.** Thus the saying, curious as a cat.



## Housing

You must provide a clean, safe environment for your foster cats/kittens. Mercy Full Project recommends that you use a spare bedroom or bathroom as your “foster” room.

If you are fostering a mom with kittens, keep the following tips in mind:

- Consider protecting your furniture and carpet with sheets or plastic table covers. Kittens can be messy, especially when they are learning to use the litter box! Make sure sheets/covers are securely tacked down so kittens don’t get under them.
- Until the age of 3-4 weeks, the mother cat will clean the kitten’s genitals to stimulate the bowels and bladder. As the kittens start showing interest in the litter box, provide them with an easily accessible box - a lower lipped box they can step over is essential.



## **Nesting Box**

A clean, warm, dry, quiet, out of traffic site should be provided for mom to raise her babes. A nesting box is essential.

The box should be large enough for mom to lie comfortably away from her litter if she chooses, but small enough so the babies are easy for her to reach. The sides need to be high enough to prevent young from wandering, but low enough for mom to come and go.

Half a transport crate is perfect.

Line the box with newspaper or puppy training pads, then with clean, dry, soft, non-shreddable, removable material.

**Do not place babies in deep, loose bedding, (straw, hay, or shavings). These materials could obstruct breathing or be inhaled and cause respiratory infections.**



## Litter Box

Kittens should be introduced to the litter box when they start eating solids. They need a box with shallow sides. After they have eaten, place them in the box. They will learn to use the litter box very quickly. Sometimes they learn just by watching mom.

Observe how kittens watch all of mom's actions; they find her fascinating and learn how to act like cats by observing her.

**Clean the box often...and NEVER use clumping litter with kittens - the dust can solidify in their lungs and their stomach's.**

## Cleaning up between litters

Once your foster pet has gone up for adoption, you must sanitize your fostering room or area before you can take home a new foster. Remove anything the kittens touched and clean it with a weak bleach solution, consisting of 1-part bleach to 32 parts cold water.

If you have items that can be washed in the dishwasher, please do so since the heat will disinfect those items.

Plastic or metal items need to be sanitized, such as litter boxes or plastic toys, should be soaked in the bleach solution for 10 minutes and then rinse off.

Wash all bedding with bleach and hot water.

Throw away any toys that cannot be sterilized.

Being conscientious about sterilization will help ensure that your nest foster will not catch any illness from the previous group of kittens.



## Types of Fostering

We have several different types of fostering that is needed.

- **Bottle Babies (6-8 weeks of care)**
- **Feeder/Growers (4-6 weeks of care)**
- **Mom with Babies (6-8 weeks of care)**
- **Resbid Care (1 week – 1 month of care)**
- **Medical (depending on the animals need)**
- **Fospice (depending on the animal's needs)**

\*We do limit the number of foster animals per household



## Picking up your fosters

Once you have committed to taking in a foster, and have scheduled a time for pick up, please arrive at the scheduled time.

If you are unable to keep the appointment or you are going to be late, please call the Foster Care Coordinator.

When you pick up the foster, you will also:

- Sign the foster agreement
- Food or litter, if needed



- Appointment for next check up

If you can bring your own carrier, it is appreciated.



## Cat Foster Supplies

We provide food, litter, and any medication needed. We try our best to send home as many of the supplies as we can.

Iams Kitten Dry	KMR, kitten milk replacer
Friskies Wet, variety of flavors	2 <sup>nd</sup> Step, weaning formula
Fancy Feast Wet, variety of flavors	Fox Valley Day One, kitten milk replacer
Baby Food, chicken flavor	Pellet Cat Litter

**\*\*In the cattery where you get supplies, is a check out list. Please make sure to fill that out EVERYTIME you take supplies.**



## Bottle Babies

What you will need for raising bottle babies:

Top loading carrier

Heating pad and/or microwave safe warming

disk Towels

Baby blankets

Wash cloths

Baby wipes/or toilet paper

Kitten Milk Replacer (KMR or Fox Valley)

Kitten nursing bottle and extra nipples

Bottle brush  
Small whisk  
Small funnel  
Kitchen food scale  
Hand sanitizer Bleach  
Cat Foster Contact  
List Small stuffed  
animal Karo Syrup  
Unflavored Pedialyte  
Bulb syringe



## Bottle Babies – feeding

### Sterilize the Bottle & Nipples

- Sterilize the bottle and nipples in boiling water, place on clean towels and let cool completely.

### Preparing the Formula

- Use a little whisk or a shaker to mix the formula.
- 2 scoops formula to 3 scoops water
- Fill several bottles at one time and refrigerate.
- Warm each as needed. Be aware the formula has a shelf life.



## Steps to Bottle Feeding a Newborn Kitten

- Warm up the formula, it is best to warm up the bottle in a coffee cup filled with warm/hot water. **\*DO NOT put the bottle in the microwave. Toxins from the plastic/rubber may leach into the milk\***
- Test the temperature on your wrist.

## Bottle Feed and burp the kitten

- Shake bottle to mix up any hot spots
- Put nipple in side of kittens mouth then center it, let kitten position it comfortably
- Squeeze a few drops out, then stop. You should feel the kitten latching on
- Do not overfeed – this can cause diarrhea.
- Stimulate the genitals so the kitten can urinate and defecate
- Offer more formula to the kitten
- Clean/bathe the kitten
- Place kitten back into warm, dry and clean nest/carrier

## Bottle Babies – feeding

### Proper Position of the Kitten for Bottle-

#### Feeding

- **IMPORTANT:** Position the kitten properly. Raising his head may cause aspiration (inhalation of formula into the lungs), which could be fatal.
- Kitten should be feet down/head straight (as if it was nursing from its mom)
- Never feed a kitten on his/her back like a human baby
- Never hold the kitten in the air while feeding
- Kitten should be manipulating the suction. Do not squeeze or force formula into his/her mouth.



## Bottle Babies – feeding

### Burping

- Kittens must be burped after every feeding
- Hold the kitten upright against your shoulder or place one hand under his/her belly and gently pat and rub his back.



## **Bottle Babies – elimination**

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- Supplies

- Toilet Paper and/or baby wipes

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- How to Stimulate a Kitten for Elimination

- Hold upright

- Stimulate genitals
- Rub in one direction like mom would
- Do not rub back and forth – friction is irritating
- Keep it up until all urination and/or defecation stops
- Kitten will not keep peeing when you stop rubbing, so continue until bladder is empty
- After, you can offer more formula, if he spits out the nipple the he is full!

## Bottle Babies – elimination

- Kittens should be urinating almost every time you stimulate them. If no urine is produced after 12 hours, please call the Foster Coordinator.
- Normal kitten poop is mustard or brown colored, firm, and formed in tiny little logs, but still squishy, especially as a newborn. Green or yellowy watery stool usually means overfeeding.
- Kittens usually poop at least once a day.
- If they do not poop for more than two days, please call the foster coordinator.

URINE	NORMAL	ABNORMAL
Color	Pale Yellow	Dark
Odor	No Odor	Pungent (strong)
STOOL	NORMAL	ABNORMAL
Color	Yellowish/Brown	White or Green

## Bottle Babies – staying clean

- Supplies
  - Baby Shampoo (i.e. Johnsons & Johnsons)
  - Soft towels with no holes or loops
  - Blow-dryer
- Bathing

- The water should be warm
- When bathing, hold each kitten tightly by the scruff of the neck
- Talk reassuringly to them during the process
- Start by getting the kitten wet
- You should only need a pea sized amount of soap, work into a good lather, spreading the later all over the kitten's body and the top of their head. Make sure you work it into their fur if your kitten(s) have long hair
- Do not immerse their head in or under water
- Don't submerge kittens in sink of water, like what you would do for a human baby
- Towel dry or blow dry on the lowest setting. If blow drying, constantly move dryer back and forth
- Place kittens back in warm nest/carrier



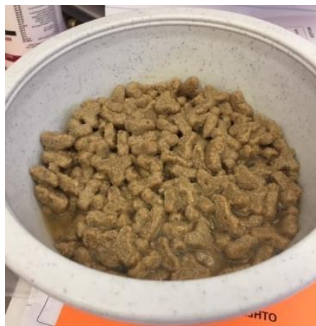
## **Bottle Babies – staying clean**



- Bottle Babies Weening and feeding:
  - Transitioning your kittens to regular food is a fun and messy time!
  - Start around 4-5 weeks of age
  - This is where it will get messy, they will eat in/on the bowl/plate instead of from the bowl
  - When you start the weaning process, start leaving out fresh water all of the time.
  - Soaked dry food can help make the transition easier
  - If you are offering a formula (2<sup>nd</sup> step)/canned food blend, its best to mix 2 parts canned food with 1-part formula (or 2<sup>nd</sup> step)
  - You can encourage the kitten to eat by smearing some on its lips or putting some on your finger and putting it in its mouth.
  - Reduce kittens bottle feeding as he starts eating more frequently from the shallow bowl
  - You can start to introduce dry kitten food in a shallow bowl – some kittens will resist weaning onto the dry food. If you cut down how many times a day you are giving wet food, this will help them to start eating the dry food.
  - Feed as much dry food as they will eat
  - Keep in mind that changes in a kitten’s diet can cause diarrhea
  - By the time the kitten reaches 6 weeks old, it should be eating dry food the majority of the time.



**\*\*There are many different foods and combinations of foods to try when it is time to wean, every kitten is different.**



← Soaked dry kitten food (lams)



← O.K to try this brand if needed →



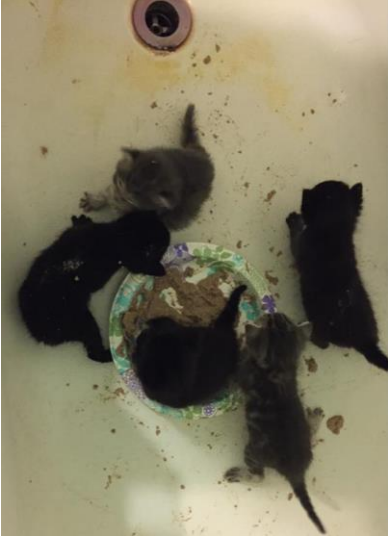
← weaning formula



## Bottle Babies Weening/Feeding:

It is best to feed the babies, somewhere that is easy to clean.

- Bathtubs work great for this!

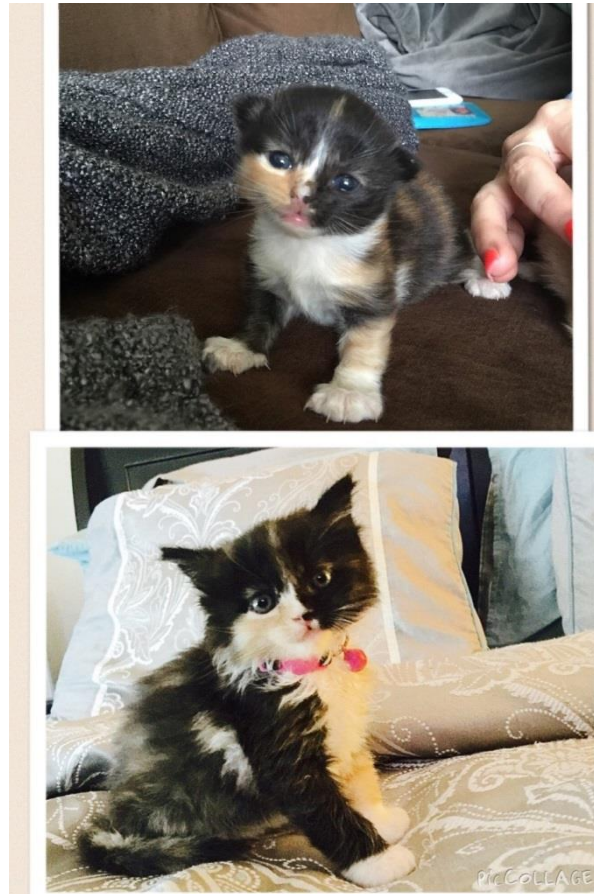


- OR cardboard boxes!



## Bottle Babies – things to remember

- The most important thing to remember...
  - There are no hard and fast rules to teach you about bottle babies.
    - \*except to keep them warm all the time\*
- 85% of it is "on the job training"



\*For picky eaters, or those that are sick and having trouble. You can try scrambled eggs, or boiled chicken (remember no bones!)

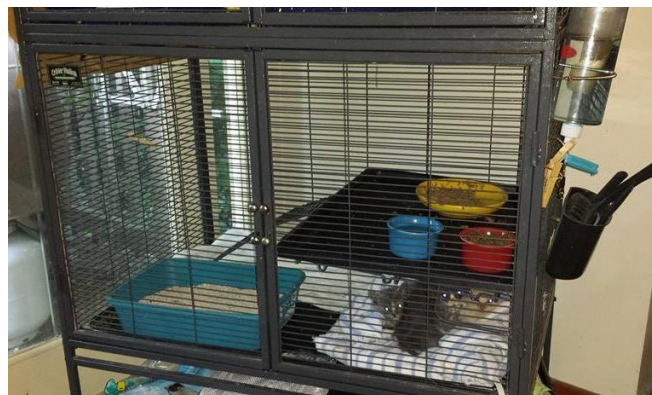
## Feeder/Growers

- **Front Street Supplies:**
  - **Food (dry and canned [if needed])**
  - **Pellet Litter**
  - **Medical Care**
  - **Guidance**
  - **Emotional Support**
  
- **You Supply**
- **Love**
- **Nurturing**
- **Safe place to grow**
- **Home environment**
- **Socialization**
- **Personality insight**



**Feeder/Growers – setting up house**

- Start with a clean, safe area that is easy to clean
  - Spare room
  - Bathroom
  - Laundry room
  - Large dog kennel, ferret cage or kitten condo or pack n play
- Consider covering your furniture with old sheets or table clothes
- Shallow litter boxes with low sides are best for small kittens, learning to use the potty box
- Place litterbox in an easily accessible area
- New kittens are required to have a 10-day quarantine away from any other foster animals and/or resident animals



## Feeder/Growers – feeding

- There should be fresh water available always
- With feeder/growers it is always better to start with dry food, if they have trouble with dry food, you can soak it in warm water.
- Of course we have wet food available if needed.
- For those picky eaters, or kittens that are battling illness, you can try feeding them chicken baby food, scrambled eggs or boiled chicken (no bones!)

\*If you do use a food that is different then what we provide, try and stay away from food with more than 1 protein or foods with fish. Studies show that fish can be hard on a kitten's digestive system

- exception: if you are instructed by the veterinarian or foster coordinator to feed these types of food(s)

\*\*Keep in mind it can take an animal's system 6-8 weeks to get used to a diet change!



## Feeder/Growers – feeding

Here are some examples of different types of food you can try.



← Chicken or Turkey flavor is best. (if you buy your own, make sure there is no onion in the ingredients)

Types of wet food:



**Feeder/Growers – feeding**

## **Kitten Brew**

For those hard to feed babies, babies that are sick or if you are having trouble weaning, try the following mixture:

- 1 handful of dry kibble, soak in HOT water
- Mix, 1 jar chicken baby food
- Mix, approximate 2 tablespoons of Nutrical (Supplicol)
- Mix, 1 teaspoon of Hi-Vite Drops
- Mix, 1 entire packet of FortiFlora

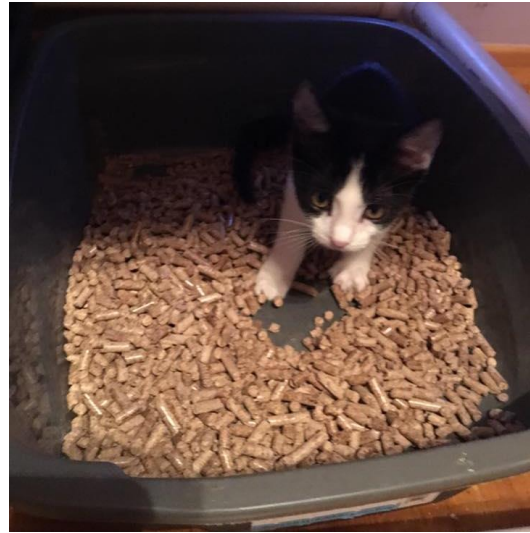
Once everything is mixed, you can puree it in a blender.

You can use a tongue depressor, or spoon to help kittens eat, and teach them how to eat from the bowl.



**Feeder/Growers – things to remember**

- It's better to put your new foster babies, in a small confined area, to start. Make sure there are litterboxes nearby.
- If they have the run of your house right away, they are more likely to have litterbox mistakes!
- Keep toenails clipped!
  - We are happy to show you how to clip nails and can even provide you with your own nail clippers if needed
- Bigger kittens need baths too
- Depending on the time of year, you may need to supply a heat source



## Mom with Babies



- Supplies
  - Kitten food (dry and wet)
  - Pellet Litter
  - Nest box
- 
- Make sure mom has kitten food and water available at all times.
  - Change bedding in nest box as needed, make sure there is a heat disk or heat pad on one side of the box.
  - The great thing about mom is that she does all the work!
  - Mom and babies should be checked on at least twice daily. Mom will wean the kittens between 4-5 weeks
  - Contact foster coordinator if the kittens are crying a lot, not nursing, cold to the touch or being ignored by the mother.



## Resbid Care

- Sometimes we have cats that are up for adoption, but they need a break from shelter life.
- If you would like to take an adoptable cat home for a short time, please let us know or respond to foster pleas when you see this type of foster opportunity listed.
- We of course will provide all supplies needed



## Medical Foster Care

- Many times we have cats that need a foster home to go to, in order to recover from surgery or other medical issues.
- Their needs can last anywhere from 1-8 weeks or sometimes longer depending on what the issue is.
- We provide food, litter and all medical care.



Jalapeno, recovering from a fracture repair



Seamus, being treated for diabetes

## Fospice Care (Foster + Hospice)

- Every now and again, we have an elderly cat that cannot be put up for adoption, but is not ready to cross the rainbow bridge.
- This is why we have Fospice care, if you think you would be able to open your home and your heart to a terminally ill kitty, please let us know.
- We will provide all food, litter and any medical care necessary.
- Fospice care can be heartbreaking, but what you are providing to the cat is priceless.



Uma went through the Fospice program in the early spring of 2015

## **Socializing Your Foster Kittens**

First and foremost, we ask that you treat your foster cat/kittens with the same love and care you give to your own companion animals. Daily attention (at least one full hour per day) from you and other family members or friends makes them more people-oriented, and more adoptable. This includes petting, playing, cuddling, trimming nails, and grooming.

By spending time with your fosters on a regular basis, you can learn more about their personality, which will help in matching them to the right family.

You should monitor for behavior problems, such as inappropriate urination or scratching furniture. **If problems arise**, contact your Foster Care Coordinator to discuss behavior modification. Mercy Full Project is not responsible for damages that might occur to yourself, others in your household, or your personal property as a result of feline behavior while in foster care.



If you have “cat friendly” dogs in your household, please consult with your Foster Care Coordinator about proper introductions. Felines who have been raised with dogs, adult cats, or children who enjoy or at least tolerate their company often have an advantage on adoption days!

**Please don't rough house with kittens or use your hands as toys, because it will encourage rough play with their “claws” when they grow up.**

*\*Be careful! Children love to play with kittens, but they may not understand how to interact with them properly. Please keep in mind that **children should not handle kittens under 3 weeks of age** and you must not allow unsupervised handling of kittens by children of any age*

## Kitten Health

\*Illnesses are usually acquired in utero, during the birthing process or in the post-weaning stage\*

## **Fading Kitten Syndrome/Failure to Thrive**

A “fading kitten” is one that appears healthy at birth, but fails to thrive (survive) beyond 12 weeks of age.

## **URI (Upper Respiratory Infection)**

Very common in animal that have spent any amount of time in the shelter. It is usually caused by one of more viruses and usually antibiotics do not treat. Antibiotics are usually prescribed by the veterinarian to combat any secondary bacterial infection that can arise from the weakened immune system.

Symptoms:

- Green/yellow nasal and/or ocular discharge
- Decreased appetite
- Lethargy
- Coughing and/or wheezing
- Fever

If your foster(s) are showing any of these symptoms, please contact the foster coordinator.



## **Diarrhea**

This is probably one of the biggest things you will deal with when raising foster kittens. The most common causes are food change and parasite infection. It can cause dehydration, so making sure your kitten is staying hydrated is key. We recommend keeping kittens on probiotics all the time, even if the stool looks good.

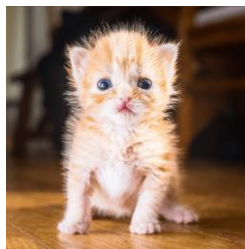
Please follow this protocol when treating diarrhea;

1. Start with pro-biotics (if you haven't already) Bene-Bac, Forti-Flora, Pro-Pectalin, give that as directed for 2-3 days. You can also try adding a small amount of plain canned pumpkin to the food, if no improvement or the diarrhea gets worse...
2. Please email the foster office [info@mercyfullprojects.org](mailto:info@mercyfullprojects.org), make sure you have the kitten's animal current weight. We can then give you a combination of three different medications that can help get rid of the diarrhea.
3. If after step 1 and 2 the kitten still has diarrhea, or it returns after treatment, please contact the foster office and bring in a stool sample. Make sure the sample is 24 hours old or less, doubled bagged and labeled with the animal ID number(s) of with kitten(s) it is from.

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## **Panleukopenia (PanLeuk)**

PanLeuk is a virus causing diarrhea, vomiting and sudden death in kittens. The virus is transmitted primarily by the fecal-oral route (including through exposure to objects/clothing/hands that are contaminated with the virus). The incubation period is generally less than 14 days, and cats may shed infections virus for 2-3 days before signs are observed. Kittens are at highest risk for this disease, and adult cats with current vaccinations are at very low risk



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## **Ringworm**

This is a common illness cats and kittens can get. Ringworm is not a worm at all but a fungal infection. There are 3 types of ringworm infection.

It is most common for cats and kittens to contract ringworm, when their immune systems are compromised and unable to fight off the fungal infection. If your foster animal does get ringworm, we have a very safe, easy way to treat it.



**\*\*Please keep in mind, that if your resident animal gets sick from your foster animals, the shelter is unable to treat your resident animal.**

**This is why that 10-day quarantine period is so important. Please talk to your vet before taking any foster animals, to make sure your own pets will stay safe and healthy.**

## Helpful Online Classes about Kitten Health

Taking the Temperature in Kittens and Puppies

<https://www.maddiesfund.org/taking-the-temperature-in-kittens-and-puppies.htm>

Emergencies in Kittens/Puppies (0-4 weeks)

<https://www.maddiesfund.org/emergencies-in-kittens-and-puppies-0-4-weeks.htm>

Emergencies in Cats/Dogs (5 weeks and over)

<https://www.maddiesfund.org/emergencies-cats-and-dogs-5-weeks-and-older.htm>

URI in Kittens/Cats

<https://www.maddiesfund.org/upper-respiratory-infection-in-kittens-and-cats.htm>

## Important Supplements





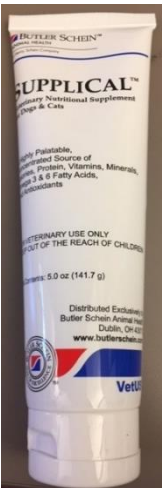
← Bene-Bac is a probiotic and can help with diarrhea. It puts good bacteria back into an animal's digestive system.



← Pro-Pectalin is also a probiotic and can help with diarrhea and upset stomachs. It puts good bacteria back into an animal's digestive system.



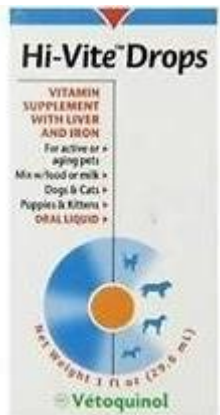
← FortiFlora is another probiotic, it is in powder form and you can mix it with kitten's food (you can mix it with formula as well). It puts good bacteria back into an animal's digestive system.



← Supplicol AKA Nutrical, this is a dietary gel that has lots of extra minerals and vitamins. This is great for animals that need extra supplements and to help them gain weight.



← **L-Lysine**, this is a dietary supplement that helps support the immune system. It is a great thing to add to the animal's food, especially if they are fighting an URI.



← **Hi-Vite Drops**, this is a vitamin/mineral supplement. Great for kittens that need an extra boost or are slow growers.

**\*\*If you want to use any other supplements, you must get re-approval from the foster coordinator and/or the shelter veterinarian**

## Veterinarian Appointments

In order for your foster animal to see the vet you must contact the foster coordinator and schedule an appointment during vet hours. Vet hours vary, and fosters pets may not be able to be seen the same day.



## Foster “Shot Clinic”

When you pick up your foster kitten(s) you will schedule the next “shot clinic” appointment. Your foster will come in every 3 weeks, until it is adopted, for a vaccine, deworming and flea control. After adoption it is the responsibility of the new family to follow up with their vet for any further vaccinations.

### Vaccines:

**FVRCP** is the vaccine for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calici Virus, and Panleukopenia (URI and Distemper)

- **FVRCP** is given at 4-6 weeks of age or older depending on when they went through intake.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> FVRCP** is given 21 days after the first FVRCP. No later than 31 days after or you will need to restart the series.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> FVRCP** is given 21 days after the second FVRCP. No later than 31 days after or you will need to restart the series.
- **4<sup>th</sup> FVRCP** is given 21 days after the third FVRCP. No later than 31 days after or you will need to restart the series. This vaccine may not be given if the kitten was vaccinated after its 16-week date with the 3<sup>rd</sup> FVRCP.

## Deworming:

**Pyrantel** is for Round Worms. You might see these and they will look like spaghetti.

- Pyrantel is given at 4 weeks of age or older depending on when they went through intake. Then every 21 days along with the FVRCP vaccine
- Cestex is for Tape Worms. You will see rice-looking segments in their stool.

## Flea Control

Advantage Multi for Cats is for flea control. It also prevents and gets rid of: Heartworm, Roundworm, Hookworm and Ear Mites

Frontline Topical Spray: Prevents and controls fleas and ticks, we also use this for lice in cats.

## Vaccination Reactions

Vaccine reactions can include, but are not limited to:

- Limping
- Not eating or drinking the normal amount for 1-2 days
- Lethargy.
- Pain at injection site
- Unwillingness to play
- Low-grade fever

**If any of these symptoms persist beyond 48 hours after the injection, contact your Foster Care Coordinator.**

**Some cats or kittens have an immediate reaction to vaccines, including severe vomiting, diarrhea, facial swelling, and difficulty breathing. IMMEDIATE vet attention is required!**

## **When to Contact the Foster Coordinator, Heydi:**

- Sneezing and/or congestion with green or yellow discharge from nose or eyes.
- Coughing, wheezing, or heavy breathing.
- Diarrhea or vomiting- This can be life threatening to kittens!
- Straining to urinate or defecate - This can be life threatening, especially in males!
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Lethargy
- Fever
- Temperature too low (below 98\*) or too high (above 104\*).
- Paralysis.
- Extreme change in attitude or behavior.
- Not eating or drinking.

**Please contact a foster mentor FIRST, they can help with most of these kitten issues. If you have a general question, need a shot clinic appointment, put kittens on the fix it list, etc please email [info@mercyfullprojects.org](mailto:info@mercyfullprojects.org)**

## **Grooming**

Most adult cats are good at cleaning and grooming themselves. However, it is still necessary to groom them regularly. This action accustoms a cat/kitten to being handled and allows you to check for any health problems. Regular grooming can make it easier for the vet to examine the cat/kitten.

Longhaired cats will require much more frequent grooming. Regular grooming will prevent snarls and tangles on the abdomen and around the inner thighs.

Rest the cat in your lap and gently groom it with a comb or brush, depending on the coat. Paws, toes, ears, and mouth should be checked as part of the grooming. Keep sessions short (about 5 minutes). If a cat/kitten is less than thrilled with this routine, you may need to hold them by the scruff of their neck. This will prevent its leaving or offering too much resistance. Offer treats to reward them for tolerating grooming.

### **Ears**

Check foster's ears at least once a month, orphans more often. Carefully clean wax deposits with a cloth wrapped finger or a cotton swab dipped in baby oil.

Be alert to inflammation or foul odor. Observe if the cat/kitten shakes its head repeatedly, rubs it against the floor, tilts it to one side or scratches at its ears.

### **Eyes**

Keep eyes clear of any discharge.

### **Trimming Nails**

Nails grow continuously. Before trimming nails, get it accustomed to having its paws handled. Gradually increase pressure on the paw so that petting becomes squeezing, as you will need to extend the claw.

You should be able to see the "pink" or "quick", which is a small blood vessel. You DO NOT want to cut into the pink portion, as it will bleed and be painful.

If you cut just the sharp tip of the claw, it will dull the nail and prevent damage from scratching.

Nails can be trimmed weekly.

## Incident Reports

*Florida State Law requires any animal that bites and breaks the skin be placed on a 10 day quarantine to observe for rabies.*

### Handling a Bite Incident

- Clean and flush wound immediately with soap and water.
- **Report the incident to a staff member.** State which animal was involved and the circumstances of the bite.
- **See your doctor.** The doctor may recommend a tetanus shot and antibiotics.

*During this time the cat/kitten may be quarantined in your home, unless you are uncomfortable with this arrangement. The cat/kitten may be returned to the shelter and placed in quarantine.*

If a bite is not reported, it creates a hazard for others handling the animal and we may release a rabid animal into the community.



## My Kitten is in the Fix-It Pile, Now What?

This is the moment you've been waiting for or maybe even dreading, you've grown your foster kitten to 2 pounds and they are ready for their spay/neuter surgery. With so many kittens in foster around the same age they tend to reach weight at the same time which means there are a lot of kittens waiting for surgery so it may be a few weeks before they are scheduled for surgery. Please be patient, we will get them scheduled as soon as possible.

The kittens will remain with you until surgery. You will pick them up after surgery so they can recover in familiar surroundings.

Once the kittens are in the fix-it pile it is time to start thinking about the biography for your kitten. The bio provides information that helps potential adopters choose the pet that is right for their family.

You will receive an email when your kitten(s) have been rescheduled for surgery. You will be instructed to bring the kittens to MFP the day of surgery at 6:30 a.m. and pick up no later than 6:30 p.m. It is crucial that you are on time. If you cannot make the appointment, you must call MFP or the Cat coordinator.



### **Pre-surgery instructions:**

**ADULTS:** No food or water after 12 midnight

**KITTENS:** Food and water ok, they can have a SMALL amount of breakfast that morning.

Kittens can be picked up between 6– 6:30 p.m. the day of surgery so they can recover at your home.

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**Post-surgery instructions:** You will keep your kitten(s) in a nice quiet area for the night, they can have food and water. It is normal for them to be anywhere from very quiet to hyper after surgery.



## **Adoption:**

All Adopters must apply online at [www.mercyfullprojects.org](http://www.mercyfullprojects.org).

Please read our adoption process, After your foster cat or kitten becomes available for adoption we will ask for your time to meet the interested families.

If your kittens are made **AVAILABLE** in our system, they will show up on our adoption website, when this happen potential adopters will send an email to the foster coordinator expressing their interest in the kitten(s). A meet and greet will be scheduled. This can be done at the rescue, during normal adoption hours. That way if everything works out, rescue staff can help facilitate the adoption.

Congratulations and thank you for growing a wonderful future family member for a very lucky adopter.



## Pictures

By appointment only through our Foster Care Coordinator, we have a professional photographer at the shelter volunteering her time. **Again by appointment only!** Good photos can help get your babies adopted.

We ask you as a foster to take the best pictures possible for us to promote your cat or kitten for adoption. Please post in our Facebook group or in your messenger group.



**Your foster must be spayed/neutered before going to their new adoptive home.  
If they are adopted but have not been fixed yet:**

**\*\*NO KITTEN IS TO BE ADOPTED FOR ADOPTION UNTIL AFTER SURGERY\*\*We do  
meet and greets for pre- adoption depending on the case.**

## **Being an Ambassador for MFP :**

As a Foster Volunteer, you are an ambassador for MFP. You are the face of the Rescue to those that you meet and talk to. Please remember to always be a good ambassador. Read up on the rescue and keep current with what is happening. Follow us on Facebook. Read your volunteer newsletter. Become familiar with our website and the different programs we offer, so that you can properly represent the shelter to those that ask. CUSTOMER SERVICE IS KING! It is very important that any potential adopter is treated with respect and dignity, and has a great experience with our shelter.

## **What to do when you find an adopter:**

The primary purpose of our foster program is to help these cats and kittens find a new home! This means that, ideally, the cats and kittens never come back to the shelter – they go from your loving foster home to their new fur-ever home.

That means that you are in the perfect position to help find potential adopters. Be sure to market your cats and kittens on your Facebook page, to your friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors. PLEASE REMEMBER YOU CAN PROMOTE THEM BUT YOUR ADOPTION COORDINATOR WILL DO THE ADOPTION PROCESS Here are some things to keep in mind • about adoptions:

- If you have not taken the adoption counseling training, please do so before you attempt to complete an adoption. It is best to arrange a meeting with shelter staff or with the lead foster volunteer in order to complete the adoption, if you have not yet been trained.
- Kittens under two months and two pounds may not yet be adopted. A potential adopter may express interest and intent, but they must wait until the kitten is two months and two pounds before completing the adoption.
- All adoptions must be completed at the shelter. Adopters must come and complete the paper work themselves. Fosters should never collect the adoption fee or send a cat or kitten directly to a new home.
- All cats and kittens must be spayed or neutered prior to going to their new home.

## Adoption Locations

- Mercy Full Project
- 901 N. Fremont Ave. Tampa
- Adoption events

## Offsite Adoption Events

- Every month, we have several adoption events at different location.
- If your babies are of age, weight and already fixed. They may attend in hopes of finding a forever home.
- Please contact our adoption coordinator and she will give you all the details



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# A “Free” Kitty is *Never* Free!

## A “Free” Kitty:

## A Kitty From MFP:

–Average Costs –

- ☑ New Patient Vet Exam - \$42
- ☑ Spay/Neuter - \$152/\$105
- ☑ FeLV and FIV Testing - \$57
- ☑ Microchip (and Registration) - \$50
- ☑ FVRCP and FeLV Vaccinations - \$41
- ☑ Treatment for Parasites (Fleas, Worms, Etc.) - \$38
- ☑ Collar - \$6

– Included in the Adoption Fee –

- ☑ Veterinary Exam
- ☑ All Medical Care Prior to Adoption
- ☑ Spay/Neuter
- ☑ Microchip
- ☑ FVRCP Vaccination
- ☑ Rabies Vaccination
- ☑ Treatment for Parasites (Fleas, Worms, Etc.)
- ☑ FeLV/FIV test (6 months and older)
- ☑ Collar/Nametag
- ☑ 30-day Return Policy

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TOTAL

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TOTAL

\$386 or more

\$65

## WE NEED YOU TO MAKE THIS PAWSIBLE

Our volunteer program is now online! You are such an important part of our team – your hard work should be counted and celebrated. If you have any questions about the volunteer program or the online volunteer system, please contact Mercy Full Project at 813-836-0711.

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# Foster Care Profile—Cat/Kitten

Cat/Kittens Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you had your foster? \_\_\_\_\_

Where does your foster spend the majority of their time?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is your foster litter box trained? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have other pets in your home?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does your foster get along with

(check all that apply) Men Women Children Dogs Cats Other Animals

What brand of food is your foster on? \_\_\_\_\_

How often is your foster fed? Morning Afternoon Evening Food is available all day

Where does your foster sleep at night? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you allow your foster on furniture? \_\_\_\_\_

Personality Traits:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Toys:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe your cat/kitten (check all those that apply) One person pet Curious Friendly  
A Loner Shy Skittish Outgoing Active Demanding  
Easygoing Moody Quiet Playful Good Companion for a child  
Companion for another animal child

Does your foster (please check):

Claw Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Claw on Drapes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Use Scratching	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Spray in House	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Post Chew Plants	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Meow	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Dig in Plants	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Excessively Like to be Held	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Other:

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Foster Volunteer's Name/Contact Info  
(optional):

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# Foster Care Agreement

## Please Read and Sign

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1. I understand the goals and mission of Mercy Full Project and, as a MFP volunteer, agree to work toward these goals and to represent this mission within the community on behalf of the organization. My commitment includes abiding by The Mercy Full Project foster care guidelines, as outlined in Mercy Full Foster Program Manual, which I have received. This includes, **but is not limited to:**
  - A commitment to keep MFP's foster cat(s)/kitten(s) indoors and not expose them to other cats that have access to outdoors.
  - A commitment to follow Front Street Shelter's instructions with regard to medical care.
  - Moms and kittens must be housed separately in their own room.
2. I understand that only MFP's Foster Coordinator, MFP Vet and the Supervisor have the authority to make exceptions/changes to program guidelines.
3. I understand that Mercy Full Project is the sole guardian of cats/kittens in foster care and that fostered cats/kittens must be returned to MFP upon Front Street Shelter's request. I understand that Mercy Full Project has the right to terminate this foster care agreement and relationship at will.
4. I understand that if I, as a foster volunteer, want to adopt any of my foster cat(s)/kitten(s), I must go through the standard MFP adoption process. I also understand that I cannot send any of my foster cat(s)/kitten(s) to an adoptive or *potential* adoptive home until the cat(s)/kitten(s) has been altered, the adoption process has been completed by a trained Adoption Counselor and the Foster Coordinator has been informed. Furthermore, I must have permission from the Foster Coordinator before sending my foster cat(s)/kitten(s) to another approved MFP foster home. I also understand that expenses for food, litter, treats, scratch posts, etc. cannot be applied toward adoption fees should I adopt a cat(s)/kitten(s).
5. **I understand that foster cat(s)/kitten(s) need to be taken to MercyFull Project for any medical care and can be reached at 8138360711 The MFP funds**

all medical care, and in the event of a medical emergency after hours or on the weekend approval is needed by the Foster Coordinator, Foster Mentor, MFP on-site Vet or Vet-Tech, and **only** if the medical care is provided at a MFP approved veterinary clinic or hospital. I understand that if I choose to take my foster cat(s)/kitten(s) to a non-approved veterinary clinic, or if I take my foster cat(s)/kitten(s) to an emergency veterinary hospital without prior approval, The MFP will not reimburse me for the expenses incurred.

6. Further, I agree that as a Foster Care Provider that MFP shall be held harmless from any and all claims, liability, judgments, losses, damages, expenses, or cost of any kind arising out of any injury related to Mercy Full Project Foster Care Program.
7. I understand that I will be asked to bring my kittens who are 6 weeks or older to one of our offsite adoption centers once a month during their regular adoption hours. This will only apply while I am actively fostering and have healthy kittens that meet the requirements to be eligible for adoption at our offsite adoption centers.
8. I understand that if I need to leave town during my foster period that I will need to give a two-week notice when possible to the Foster Coordinator for my kittens to be permanently rehomed to another MFP foster home.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Foster Parent	Signature	Date

_____	_____
Foster Coordinator	Date

Name(s) of foster cat(s)/kitten(s) sent to foster on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Information from Foster Home



Foster Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Although you may wish to change the schedule or diet to fit your family's lifestyle, the following is intended to provide an idea of the current conditions or habits that the animal is accustomed to. You may wish to transition slowly into changes, especially dietary as changing too quickly can create digestive upset.

FOOD

Type of Food:  
 Kibble Brand: \_\_\_\_\_ Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Cup per meal  Level or  Heaping  
 Wet Brand: \_\_\_\_\_ Qty:  Level or  Heaping  
 Teaspoon or  Tablespoon

Feed Schedule: 

Breakfast	Meal 2	Meal 3	Dinner
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\_\_\_\_\_ x Day General times: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  Take water away at bedtime.

..... If eats too fast, spread food out on plate or tray with sides or use a slow feed bowl. ....

ROUTINE

Generally, wakes @ \_\_\_\_\_ Bedtime @ \_\_\_\_\_

Naps \_\_\_\_\_

Potty usage: Potty Pads / Grass / Both / litter box \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*For best potty training **ALWAYS immediately** after waking and after eating\*\*

Daytime Routine? \_\_\_\_\_

Nighttime Routine? \_\_\_\_\_

.....

LEARNING

Special Words: (such as "Go Potty", "No Bite", "Easy", "Gentle"....)

\_\_\_\_\_ = Potty \_\_\_\_\_

Learning or Training being reinforced: (i.e.: learning to sit, stay...)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

.....

SPECIAL

Medications if applicable:

Currently on \_\_\_\_\_ times per day \_\_\_\_\_ Doses remaining \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_.

Notes, Personality, or Additional Behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If recently neutered/spayed, please continue to monitor incision for redness, swelling, drainage, or opening. DO NOT allow licking of the incision site. Quite often a cone/surgical collar is necessary to prevent this. NO bathing or water to area for two weeks from surgery. Surgical Glue may be used. Water can compromise integrity of site and allow pathogens. Please read post-operative instructions. Your new family member may have experienced a lot of changes recently. Possibly spay/neuter surgery, transport to vet or rescue, loss of a sibling group, and unfamiliar new environment in your home.. This can all be overwhelming, but animals are loving and resilient. They will adapt. Please consider these changes when setting your expectations. Time is required for them to feel safe and become accustomed to your routine. Time and positive reinforcement are your friends. Please read 333 rule attached.

# THE 3 DAYS, 3 WEEKS, 3 MONTHS RULE OF ADOPTING A RESCUE DOG

The 3-3-3 Rule is a general guideline of the decompression process for a Canine in a new environment.

Every dog is unique and will adjust differently, so give them space and allow them to go at their own pace!

## 3D

THE FIRST 3 DAYS,

- GIVE THEM SPACE
- SET YOUR BOUNDARIES EARLY
- STAY CALM AND GIVE CLEAR DIRECTION
- START YOUR DAILY ROUTINE RIGHT AWAY
- DO NOT FORCE INTERACTION
- BE PATIENT AND STAY POSITIVE

## 3W

AFTER 3 WEEKS,

- WILL FEEL MORE SETTLED
- WILL START TO TEST BOUNDARIES
- WORK BASIC O (SIT, WAIT, DOWN, COME)
- GIVE CLEAR DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES
- GIVE CALM, CLEAR FEEDBACK TO THEM ON WHEN THEY ARE MISBEHAVING
- PRASE EVERY SUCCESS!

## 3M

AFTER 3 MONTHS,

- WILL START TO TRUST NEW HOME
- WILL UNDERSTAND ROUTINE
- DO NOT EASE OFF TRAINING, MORE IS BETTER!
- WILL START TO BUILD BOND- USE AFFECTION AS A RESOURCE!
- WILL BEGIN TO BUILD GREAT HABITS IF YOU FOLLOW THIS!

## It Doesn't Happen Overnight

The 3/3/3/ rule is a general guideline for the adjustment period of a pet after adoption. Every pet is unique and will adjust differently. Please have patience and allow your new pet time to settle in.

		
<p><b>3 Days</b> <i>To Decompress</i></p>	<p><b>3 Weeks</b> <i>To Learn Your Routine</i></p>	<p><b>3 Months</b> <i>To Start to Feel at Home</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling overwhelmed</li> <li>• May feel scared or unsure of what's going on</li> <li>• Not yet comfortable to be "himself"</li> <li>• May not want to eat or drink</li> <li>• Shuts down and/or hides under furniture</li> <li>• Tests the boundaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starts settling in</li> <li>• Feels more comfortable</li> <li>• Realizes this could be his forever home</li> <li>• Figures out his environment</li> <li>• Gets into a routine</li> <li>• Lets his guard down; beginning to show his true personality</li> <li>• Behavior issues may appear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finally feels completely comfortable in his home</li> <li>• Begins to build trust and a true bond</li> <li>• Gains a complete sense of security with his new family</li> <li>• Sets into a routine</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://CatBehaviorSolutions.org">CatBehaviorSolutions.org</a></p>

FOSTER SUPPLIES PROVIDED

Animal Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Foster Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



**Dog Foster Supplies:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ID Tag            | <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed Metal CrateS / M / L |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leash             | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Crate S / M / L        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collar            | <input type="checkbox"/> Playpen 24" / 36" / 48"       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poop / Waste Bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Bed                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Food-Dry      | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming Supplies             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Food- Wet     | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treats            | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans for Training            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flea & Heartworm  | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans for Veterinary          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prevention _____  | <input type="checkbox"/> Care _____                    |

**Cat Foster Supplies:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Premium Brand Cat Food    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cat Carrier                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Collar with ID Tag | <input type="checkbox"/> Cat Bed / Box with Towel or Blanket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Dish                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Interactive Toys                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Bowl                | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming Supplies: Brush or Comb    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Scratching Post or Scratching Pad   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter Box                | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans for Veterinary Care           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treats                    | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flea & Heartworm          | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                               |
| Prevention   |  |

Please understand that as a non-profit, we have limited resources to provide all necessities and additional enrichment for each animal in our care. We appreciate your care and effort as a foster. Unfortunately, we often do not receive the supplies back when foster care has ended. Every dollar saved is a dollar that can be used to further the cause of caring for and placing as many animals as possible in loving fur ~~Not Items can~~ be sanitized and reused. Thank you, in advance for returning all supplies that have been provided for the foster period.

I understand that the pet supplies provided for foster are the property of Mercy Full Projects and are to be returned at the end of the foster period.

Foster Signature: \_\_\_\_\_